

# Ensemble Laude



**FOR OVER TWO DECADES ENSEMBLE LAUDE** women's choir has enchanted audiences in Canada and internationally with its creative blend of medieval repertoire and contemporary choral works from around the world. Ensemble Laude is a community of women united by a passion for choral music and the vision of our Artistic Director, Dr. Elizabeth MacIsaac. We celebrate the beauty and resilience of women's vocal traditions through the ages and seek to share this art form through joyful, soulful, and life-enhancing performances that gladden the heart, lift the spirit, and expand the mind.

Ensemble Laude began in 1998 with a group of 12 singers focused solely on medieval music. It has since expanded into a vibrant choir of about 50 vocalists. Today, our concerts offer an eclectic repertoire, mostly unaccompanied, encompassing early music, sacred and secular works, and folk and world music. We are committed to expanding choral repertoire for women's voices and regularly commission new Canadian works.

As an auditioned community choir, Ensemble Laude provides opportunities for women and non-binary individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to perform at a high level of excellence. In 2016 we represented Canada at the international Choralies festival in France and performed at the Église St. Pierre d'Arène in Nice and the St. Sauveur Cathedral in Aix-en-Provence. In 2018 we were a Spotlight choir at the National Podium Conference in St John's, NFL. Ensemble Laude regularly commissions new works and is gifted new arrangements from Canadian composers. This year, we have recorded our second CD, *Vox Femina* and are launching our upper voice youth choir, Lumina.



## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DR. ELIZABETH MACISAAC

MacIsaac's mission with all groups she directs is to build community: both within the ensemble and in outreach to youth and audience alike. Elizabeth is the founder and Artistic Director of Ensemble Laude. Dr. Elizabeth MacIsaac has directed choirs of all ages in Canada, France and the United States.

MacIsaac lived in Europe for many years, studying, performing and teaching music. Upon her return to Canada, MacIsaac joined the faculty of the Victoria Conservatory of Music in British Columbia. Artistic Director since 1999 of the Canadian women's choir Ensemble Laude, the ensemble has garnered many awards at competitions held across Canada. The auditioned ensemble blends seasoned soloists with amateur vocalists and is inclusive of women of all ages and skill levels.

Dr. MacIsaac recently completed her Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of Washington in Seattle (2018), graduating summa cum laude. Deeply involved in both the local and international choral communities, she has traveled widely to lead vocal clinics and choral workshops. This past year, MacIsaac taught choral pedagogy at the University of Victoria and traveled to the Choralies Festival in Vaison-la-Romaine to conduct several of her choral arrangements. Recently, MacIsaac presented and performed her dissertation transcriptions of motets from the Ursuline Archives of Quebec with noted Canadian soprano Suzie LeBlanc for the Orford Chamber Music Festival, Quebec, and at the Ursuline monastery of origin in Quebec City. MacIsaac's dissertation research re-discovered lost and historically significant choral Baroque repertoire recognized to be Canada's first Baroque polyphony. MacIsaac has presented papers, conducted choirs and performed as soloist across the globe (Wales, France, Hungary, England, Ireland, Germany, the USA and Newfoundland). Amongst several awards for her choral work and research, MacIsaac has received two distinctions from the BC Choral Federation: most recently the Amy Ferguson Award (2017) for outstanding choral direction fostering excellence in superior vocal practice. Dr. MacIsaac also teaches at University of Victoria.



## ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR CHRISTINA BANMAN

Frequently praised for her "energetic" and "creative" approach to directing, Christina Banman is an emerging force in the choral community. Having grown up in the rich choral culture of Manitoba, Christina has been singing in choirs since the age of 10. She received her Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education from the University of Manitoba, with a focus on secondary choral music. She has spent nearly a decade working with high school aged singers and was interviewed by CBC Radio in 2021 for her unique approach to help students continue singing safely throughout the pandemic.

Christina believes in promoting healthy vocal technique, and in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for singers to test the boundaries of their abilities. She recognizes the power of community a choir can create, and believes that singing in a choir can build self-confidence and leadership skills in all ages. In 2017-2018, Christina was one of Ensemble Laude's first Emerging Artists, a mentorship program designed to help young female directors build confidence and gain skills in conducting. Christina returned as the Associate Director of Ensemble Laude in 2022 and is beyond thrilled to be launching the Lumina Treble Youth Choir in the fall of 2023.